2/14/72

Dear Howard,

I had not gotten far in Khruschev Remember when I recommended it to you, not just because of your general interest in history but because certain elements of the Southeast Asia situation are rather directly related to the era of which I knew he would have to write. I am nibbling away at it and have just come to that particular era. It is chapter 5, beginning on 129 in the Banta, edition. I have also referred you to a book that may not be easy to find, Dennis Pritt's. I doubt mine survived wartime storage.

I have also told you that while I have not thought of such matters for years, I seem to remember Crankshaw as one who built a successful career on being anti-USSR. Here is a classic case of that. I fear you will not be told the reality of what is there discussed.

The treaty that Robbentrop proposed to Stalin is identical with one the USSR had offered to and signed with a number of countries. At t is time, the Western European powers, in pursuit of the policy to which Khruschev here gives but a sentence, had been fattening Hitler, givin him what he wanted every time. They had expected him to turn to the east. He led them to believe he would. At this crucial juncture he moved in the opposite direction. His attack on Poland was not as much anti-USSR as it was anti-west.

In any event, there here is a remarkably dishonest footnote and one missing at the ref to the Kh. statement above. The reality is hardly covered (130-1) in the description "half-hearted". The western countries had sent a delegation of powerless subalterns to "negotiate" with the USSR. Public opinion only forced this. They had to send someone, so they sent nobodies, going through the motions only.

The USSR proposal was for more than the undescribed delegation of Crankshaw's footnote. It was a six-power one, including even Turkey, the purpose being to keep Hitler within his borders. Earlier, the USSR and France had had a treaty to join in the defense of any other country. I clearly recall this as it relates to Czech. Litvinoff announced USSR readiness to abide by its obligations. France would not. The USSR had negotiated the required permission for transit for its armies in defense of Czech. This was perhaps the crucial point, prior to the dispatch of the kindergarten military delegations to Moscow. It then became clear that the western policy, in which the United States was a guilty silent partner, was to strengthen Hitler so he could beat the USSR. Moscow certainly had to read it that way. They had to read the character of the delegation finally sent, without power to do more than attends its toilet needs (I think the ranking British officer was no more than a major), as having the same meanong. They all did go through the motions. Crazy as the things Hitler did are, this is perhaps one of recent history's more brilliant moves. At the right time he secured his eastern flank, and the west set it up for him.

Most hatred is self-consuming. In policy, the hatred of Communism has beenthe factor that helped it succeed more than any other. What within itself it overcame is here set forth by Kh. with what I regard as remarkable honesty, esp. when compared with the style in US leaders' memoirs, for example, LBJ's now. It has never ended, Never learning, western leaders have followed only variations of the same stupidity, without major deviation, to now, and what "now" is we'll have to wait to see. Taken in the context of history, it is a barbarity greater, I think possible, than Attila the Hun, On a less moral plane, it is what will eventually bankrupt this country and may well guarantee the world ascendancy of Communism in some form. The effect on the growth and economy of the "red" lands has been severe, but they are without debt, paying as they go, if severely restricted by it. But this kind of western policy has forced a self-reliance on the other side it might not have achieved without it. It has slowed down their internal development, but no more than that...People have a tendency to forget, but one of Kh's ridiculed boasts has already come true, that they would overtake us in the fields of our pre-eminence. He specified steel, and that has now happened....This is hasty, before I begin the early-morning's work. I came to the note while shaving and making my coffee. I think the thesis I urged upon you should begin at the end of WWII, with the western invasion of the young USSR. This 1939 period is also crucial in it. These are the seeds of the weed. Best,